

Message Text

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SUBJECT: INDEPENDENCE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND?

REF: BELFAST 393, BELFAST 396

1. THE CURRENT SPATE OF DISCUSSION ON THE POSSIBILITY OF INDEPENDENCE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND(REFTELS) HAS GENERATED MUCH DISCUSSION IN THE REPUBLIC. FIANNA FAIL LEADER LYNCH, IN A SPEECH NOV. 15, SAID HE VIEWED THE ULCCC PAPER ON INDEPENDENCE AS A "TREMENDOUS ADVANCE IF AN END TO BLOODSHED AND VIOLENCE" RESULTED FROM IT. HE ALSO SAID HE UNDERSTANDS THE PROPOSAL AS INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF POWER-SHARING. LYNCH, HOWEVER, SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WAS REALISTIC TO BELIEVE THAT A NORTHERN IRELAND STATE COULD SURVIVE LONG AS A VIABLE ECONOMIC ENTITY.

2. WE HAVE NOT DETECTED ANY OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT REACTION AS YET TO THE TALK OF INDEPENDENCE. THE GOVERNMENT IS ON RECORD OPPOSING INDEPENDENCE UNLESS A GOVERNMENT SATISFACTORY TO BOTH SIDES IS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED. FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD SAID AT THE OXFORD UNION NOV. 11 THAT THE GOI IS STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF A "DEVOLVED" GOVERNMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHICH INCLUDED POWER-SHARING. HE INTIMATED THAT THE REPUBLIC WOULD BE WILLING TO
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CHANGE ITS CONSTITUTION TO ELIMINATE ITS CLAIMS TO AUTHORITY OVER NORTHERN IRELAND IF SUCH A GOVERNMENT WERE SET UP. HE DID NOT,

HOWEVER, ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF AN INDEPENDENT ULSTER.

3. NEWSPAPER COMMENTS ON THE INDEPENDENCE TALK ARE GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO THE IDEA OF "DISCUSSING" INDEPENDENCE, WHICH COULD BE A POSITIVE STEP, THOUGH NONE ARE WILLING TO ACTUALLY UNQUALIFIEDLY SUPPORT THE IDEA OF INDEPENDENCE AS A WORKABLE SOLUTION. DAVID MCKITTRICK OF THE IRISH TIMES NOTES THAT WHILE DISCUSSING INDEPENDENCE THE LOYALISTS "HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING PROPOSALS WHICH, A SHORT TIME AGO, WOULD HAVE BEEN UNTHINKABLE FOR ANY LOYALIST GROUPING." THE IRISH PRESS SUPPORTS LYNCH'S QUALIFIED ACCEPTANCE OF THE DISCUSSIONS AND TALKS OF "THE EMERGING CONCEPT OF TWIN STATES; INDEPENDENT OF EACH OTHER BUT WORKING TOGETHER AS AN INTERIM MEASURE." CURLEY

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